

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 261542Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2020

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15336

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: LE, XF, APER, BEXP

SUBJECT: POSITION OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE

REF: USDOC 14241; STATE 211525; BEIRUT 1739 (ALL NOTAL)

1. DURING MY RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON I WAS ASKED
WHETHER THE DEPUTY REGIONAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
POSITION IN BEIRUT SHOULD BE FILLED. I INDICATED I
WISHED ONCE AGAIN TO CONSULT WITH MY COLLEAGUES IN
BEIRUT BEFORE GIVING MY OPINION.

2. UPON RETURNING TO BEIRUT, MY IMPRESSION WAS
CONFIRMED THAT EDWARD KINNEAR, COMMERCE'S
CANDIDATE FOR THE DEPUTY RTDO JOB, WHO HAD BEEN ON
TDY IN BEIRUT FOR THREE MONTS, CARRIED OUT HIS
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FUNCTIONS HERE, AS FAR AS WE COULD OBSERVE, IN

A MOST SATISFACTORY MANNER AND HAS PROVED TO BE WELL QUALIFIED TO SERVE IN THIS CAPACITY. WE ALSO REVIEWED HERE THE BACKGROUND OF THIS POSITION AND I BELIEVE THAT THIS BACKGROUND SHOULD BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD IN DEALING WITH COMMERCE IN THIS CONNECTION.

3. AS WE UNDERSTAND IO HERE, IN MAY 1972 IT WAS DECIDED BETWEEN STATE AND COMMERCE TO ESTABLISH A REGIONAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE IN BEIRUT. IT WAS ALSO AGREED ON A PROVISIONAL BASIS NOT REPEAT NOT TO FILL THE CUSTOMARY DEPUTY POSITION, IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN PRECISELY HOW THIS OFFICE WOULD DEVELOP. IN APRIL 1973 COMMERCE REMINDED US OF THIS DECISION AND MY PREDECESSOR NOTED THAT ON THE BASIS OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE RTDO, IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO FILL THE DEPUTY POSITION (GS CATEGORY), AS COMMERCE INDICATED A DESIRE TO DO. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, HOWEVER, WE EXPERIENCED THE UNSETTLING EVENTS OF MAY 1973 AND IN A GENERAL DECISION FOR SECURITY REASONS IT WAS DECIDED TO CONTINUE TON SUSPEND FILLING THE DEPUTY POSITION.

4. IN JULY OF 1974 COMMERCE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOSTLER, RETURNING FROM THE ECON/COMMERCIAL OFFICERS CONFERENCE IN TEHRAN, STOPPED OFF IN BEIRUT AND RAISED THE MATTER ONCE MORE WITH US, NOTING THAT COMMERCE HAD A COMPETENT OFFICER TO BE THE DEPUTY HERE AND DESIRED TO FILL THIS POSITION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AT THAT TIME I INFORMED HOSTLER THAT I BELIEVED THE SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT HANGED SUFFICIENTLY FOR THE GOOD TO VITIATE THE SECURITY ANGLE PREVENTING THE FILLING OF THE POSITION THAT HAD BEEN AGREED TO AND AUTHORIZED. WE HAD ALSO OBSERVED THE REMARKABLE SUCCESS OF OUR EFFORTS IN THE DAMASCUS FAIR, WHICH I GATHER WERE DUE IN NO SMALL MEASURE TO THE RTDO'S ACTIVITIES IN THIS CONNECTION. WE WERE ALSO AWARE OF THE PLANS FOR THE CAIRO TRADE FAIR AND THIS FAIR WOULD BE WITHIN THE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
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OF THE RTDO. (BEIRUT IS WORKING ACTIVELY WITH EMBASSY CAIRO IN RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS FOR THE FAIR.) I THEREFORE INFORMED HOSTLER THAT I WOULD WELCOME FILLING THE DEPUTY POSITION BY A COMPETENT, EXPERIENCED OFFICER WHENEVER FEASIBLE.

5. AS THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, THE RTDO HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH THE CONDUCT OF THIS MISSION'S COMMERCIAL

WORK, IN THAT WE ARE FORTUNATE IN HAVING A FULL-TIME COMMERCIAL OFFICE HERE WHICH HANDLES LEBANESE COMMERCIAL MATTERS. THE RTDO'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY IS THEREFORE NON-LEBANESE, EXCEPT WHEN PARTICIPATION IN EXHIBITS AND FAIRS IS INVOLVED. THE RTDO TRAVELS EXTENSIVELY THROUGHOUT THE REGION AND IS PHYSICALLY IN BEIRUT FOR LESS THAN 50PCT OF HIS TIME. WHETHER VIEWS, I BELIEVE, SHOULD BE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE IN DECIDING WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE A DEPUTY RTDO IN BEIRUT.

6. IN THIS CONNECTION I WISH TO STRESS THAT I HAVE NO BRIEF FOR THE LOCATION IN BEIRUT OF THE RTDO AND AND WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION IF IT WERE LOCATED ELSEWHERE IN THE AREA OF WASHINGTON, WHICH IS IN A BETTER POSITION TO JUDGE THESE MATTERS, DECIDED SO TO DO. WERE IT LOCATED OUTSIDE OF BEIRUT, I WOULD ASSUME, HOWEVER, THAT I COULD DRAW ON THE RTDO WHENEVER FAIRS OR MISSIONS HERE HAD INTRA-REGIONAL ASPECTS. I ALSO AM NOT IN A POSITION TO JUDGE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RTDO, BUT I COULD HOPE THAT AMBASSADOR MURPHY IN DAMASCUS MIGHT EXPRESS HIS VIEWS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RTDO IN CONNECTION WITH THE DAMASCUS FAIR EARLIER THIS YEAR.

7. AMBASSADOR AIKEN MIGHT ALSO WISH TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS ON THE RTDO ACTIVITIES, FOR I UNDERSTAND THE RTDO HAS SPENT A GOOD DEAL OF TIME IN SAUDI ARABIA.

8. IN VIEW OF THE NECESSITY TO RESTRICT THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL SERVING ABROAD, I BELIEVE THAT THE VALUE OF THE RTDO OPERATION CAN BEST BE DETERMINED IN WASHINGTON. I CANNOT HELP BUT NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT
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I WOULD ASSUME THIS DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED BACK IN 1972 WHEN, AS I UNDERSTAND, IT WAS DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH A TWO-MAN RTDO IN BEIRUT, IF FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF WASHINGTON AND OTHER POSTS IN THE REGION THE RTDO WAS OF HELP, I DO NOT SEE HOW WE CAN OBJECT TO THERE BEING A TWO-MAN POSITION AS WAS ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED AND FOR WHICH I GATHER COMMERCE HAS THE NECESSARY FUNDS AND COMPETENT PERSONNEL.
GODLEY

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